

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

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FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3655

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BERLIN 7141

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CSCE, GE

SUBJECT: REPORTED GDR CRACKDOWN ON DISSIDENTS AND EMIGRATION

REF: A) STATE 285501; B) STATE 284853; C) BERLIN 7136

1. EMBASSY'S REPORTING CABLE ON BIERMANN AFFAIR (REFTEL C), SENT BEFOR WE RECEIVED REFTELS A AND B, GAVE OUR INITIAL ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT OF CASE ON GDR PUBLIC, CULTURAL WORLD, AND POSSIBLE IMPACT ON FRG/GDR RELATIONS. WE BELIEVE OUR ASSESSMENT IS MORE BALANCED AND VALID THAN THE BIERMANN ASPECT OF LENTZ NYT NOVEMBER 19 ARTICLE, ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT THINK ALL THE DUST HAS YET SETTLED.

2. WE ARE INCLINED TO THINK THAT THE DECISION TO EXPEL BIERMANN WAS MADE IN ADVANCE, BUT THAT THE LEADERSHIP UNDERESTIMATED THE INTENSITY OF WEST GERMAN MEDIA PLAY, AND DID NOT EXPECT THE PUBLIC AND COORDINATED REACTION OF A SMALL GROUP OF PROMINENT INTELLECTUALS. ON THE FRG ANGLE, GDR MEDIA NOVEMBER 21 AND EAST BERLIN NEWSPAPERS NOVEMBER 22 CARRY A VERY BRIEF ADN ITEM NOTING THAT, " UNOFFICIALLY", THE MFA IS LOOKING INTO WHAT GDR REACTION MAY BE TAKEN AGAINST THE " INTERFERENCE FRIDAY  
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EVENING BY ARD ( WEST GERMAN TELEVISION). IT IS NOT

EXCLUDED THAT THE ARD-OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED." THE "INTERFERENCE" TO WHICH ND REFERS WERE TV REPLAYS NOVEMBER 17 AND 19 OF BIERMANN'S NOVEMBER 17 COLOGNE PERFORMANCE. WE ASSUME THE CLOSING OF THE ARD OFFICE WOULD BE IN VIOLATION OF THE DECEMBER 2, 1972 FRG/GDR BASIC AGREEMENT.

3. ON THE DOMESTIC FRONT, THE REGIME IS NOW FACED WITH HOW TO HANDLE SOMETHING THAT HAS NOT HAPPENED BEFORE; OPPOSITION TO A REGIME DECISION, MADE PUBLIC BY WELL-KNOWN CULTURAL FIGURES. AS PART OF ITS RESPONSE, THE REGIME HAS CRANKED UP A DISPLAY OF GDR CULTURAL WORLD SUPPORT FOR ITS POSITION. EAST BERLIN NEWSPAPERS NOVEMBER 20/21 AND NOVEMBER 22 CARRY FULL PAGES OF MESSAGES OF SUPPORT, INCLUDING LETTERS FROM WRITERS HERMAN KANT; PRESIDENT OF THE GDR ARTISTS ASSOCIATION, WILLI SITTE; PRESIDENT OF THE GDR WRITERES ASSOCIATION ANNA SEGHERS, AND OTHER LESS WELL-KNOWN CULTURAL FIGURES. SCULPTOR FRITZ CREMER, ORIGINALLY LISTED AS SIGNING THE PETITION IN SUPPORT OF RECONSIDERING THE DECISION AGAINST BIERMANN, HAS NOW PUBLICALLY CHANGED HIS MIND, SAYING THAT HIS NAME WAS MISUSED. SO, ALSO, HAS ERICH SCHALL, SAYING THAT LETTER WAS INTENDED FOR APPROPRIATE GDR AUTHORITIES AND THEREFORE ITS WESTERN PUBLICATION IS A MISUSE OF HIS ATTITUDE. AN SED CENTRAL COMMITTEE PLENUM IS PLANNED FOR THE FIRST WEEK OF DECEMBER ( PERHAPS DECEMBER 8-9) TO DISCUSS AND APPROVE THE 1977 PLAN AND THE BUDGET. IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT THE CULTURAL SITUATION COULD ALSO BE ON THE AGENDA.

4. WE ARE UNAWARE OF ANY POLITBURO DECISION TO INSTITUTE NEW, RESTRICTIVE ROLES ON EMIGRATION TO THE WEST. AT A NOVEMBER 19 LUNCHEON OF DCMS OF WESTERN COUNTRIES TO EXCHANGE STATISTICS AND INFORMATION ON FAMILY REUNIFICATION, MARRIAGES, ETC. CASES, THERE WERE NO REPORTS OF NEW RESTRICTIONS OR DIFFICULTIES IN THE SLOW PROCESS OF RESOLVING CONSULAR CASES. WE DO NOT KNOW WHO ELLEN LENTZ' SOURCES ARE ON A NEW DECISION BY THE POLITBURO, BUT WILL ATTEMPT TO CHECK THE ACCURACY OF HER REPORT. WE HAVE, AT THE SAME TIME, REPORTED THE INCREASED NUMBERS

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OF EAST GERMANS WHO ARE APPLYING TO LEAVE AND THE PROBLEMS THIS CAUSES THE REGIME. WE HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE FRG PERMANENT REPRESENTATION OVER THE PAST SEVERAL DAYS, AND HAVE NO INDICATION THAT THE NUMBERS OF APPLICATIONS THEY HAVE BEEN RECEIVING HAS SHOWN ANY MARKED CHANGE.

5. THE GDR IS NOT THE HAPPIEST PLACE TO LIVE.

DISSATISFACTION WITH THE STANDARD OF LIVING, AND  
FRUSTRATION AT BEING LOCKED IN THE GDR REMAIN  
FUNDAMENTAL FEATURES OF THE LIVES OF MOST EAST GERMANS.  
THE PEOPLE GRUMBLE AND COMPLAIN OPENLY--PERHAPS A GOOD  
SAFETY VALVE--BUT OUR ASSESSMENT BASED ON TRIPS AND  
OBSERVATIONS IS THAT THERE IS NOT--UNDER PRESENT  
CONDITIONS--ENOUGH " FERMENT OF OPPOSITION(THAT)  
MIGHT ENDANGER THE COUNTRY'S INTERNAL SECURITY."

6. THE EMBASSY IS POUCHING NOVEMBER 22 AN AIRGRAM  
REPORTING PUBLIC REACTION NOVEMBER 17-18--IN BERLIN,  
HALLE AND LEIPZIG--ON THE SINDERMANN AND BIERMANN  
OUSTERS THE GENERAL CONCLUSION OF WHICH IS THAT, WHILE  
PEOPLE ARE AWARE, THEY ARE BASICALLY PASSIVE OR  
INDIFFERENT TO THESE DEVELOPMENTS.  
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